GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:715
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2005
SUN TEMPLE
Chakrabortty Shri Swadesh;Purandeswari Smt. Daggubati;Seth Shri Lakshman Chandra

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a)whether attention of the Government has been drawn to news-item captioned, 'Dark clouds over Sun Temple' appearing in the 'Indian Express' dated June 13, 2005;

(b)if so, the facts of the matter therein; and

(c)the steps taken / to be taken by the Government to preserve the heritage of this temple?

Answer

MINISTER FOR INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY)

(a)to(c)Yes, Sir. Prior to the protection of the temple by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1937, architectural members of the temple were scattered in the nearby villages. These are since collected and housed in the archaeological museum and study is being carried out to locate their original position. The Sun Temple receives regular attention in terms of structural conservation, chemical preservation & environment development. Scientific studies on the temple do not indicate any threat to the structure though there was some deterioration to the stone elements. The architectural members of the temple are built of Khondalite, a soft stone. As the temple is located close to the sea, it is subjected to salt laden sea wind which causes surface damage to the stone members. This also causes crystallization of soluble salts leading to weathering and corrosion of the stone. Following remedial measures are adopted regularly to control weathering of stone members and to conserve the heritage:-

(i) Soluble salts are removed by repeated paper pulp treatment.

(ii) Micro-vegetational and fungicidal growth are being treated chemically.

(iii) The weathering effects are minimized through stone consolidation.

(iv) Water tightening and underpinning of the structure are carried out using traditional mortar.

The Archaeological Survey of India had erected tubular scaffolding on the south and western side of the temple for strengthening some of the stone members. Efforts are on to remove the scaffolding after strengthening the cantilever of the temple. In consultation with the State Government, a master plan has been prepared for the integrated development of the site and the Sun Temple under the auspices of the National Culture Fund. The project would be financed by the Indian Oil Foundation.